

The Briefing



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Too much cross of Christ?

[Gordon Cheng \(http://matthiasmedia.com/briefing/authors/gordon-cheng/\)](http://matthiasmedia.com/briefing/authors/gordon-cheng/) | 8 April, 2010

Is it possible to be focused too on the cross of Christ?

The answer has to be no. In fact, the nastiest pieces of theological misguidance that I've come across have lost any sense that the cross of Christ is where we find everything—our sin, God's love, his judgement, our salvation, and the mystery of Trinitarian theology working itself out in a place beyond our comprehension.

However John Stott brought me up short with this:

... if we dare to call our Judge our Father we must beware of presuming on him. It must even be said that our evangelical emphasis on the atonement is dangerous if we come to it too quickly. We learn to appreciate the access to God which Christ has won for us only after we have first seen God's inaccessibility to sinners. We can cry 'Hallelujah' with authenticity only after we have first cried 'Woe is me, for I am lost'.

That's from *The Cross of Christ* (p. 109). After *Basic Christianity*, it is Stott's most useful book.

Translated into English from the English, Stott is saying, "Preach the cross as much as you like. But it is just a piece of stupidity in a distant historical context unless we understand why it is there. It's as ridiculous as taking a pill the doctor offers, without understanding that I'm sick—no, *really* sick."

Until I understand that I am a sinner, that God really hates me for it, and that I really am going to the place where the fire burns without being extinguished and the worm does not die, I can't begin understand the love he showed me when his Son died in my place for my sins, bearing the full weight of his Father's wrath against me.

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